

Commission for Women

Volume 43

Newsletter of the Montgomery County Commission for Women

October 2003

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Pat Cornish Elected President of Commission for Women

By Tracy Stuger

In a unanimous vote, Pat Cornish was elected president of the Montgomery County Commission for Women in July 2003. **Pat Cornish** has been active with Business and Professional Women on the local, state and national level. She served as President of the Maryland State Federation BPW and recently completed her term as National President of Business and Professional Women USA, an organization of 50,000 members in 52 state federations, in 2,000 local organizations. She serves as a Trustee of the BPW/USA Foundation and the BPW Maryland Foundations. A resident of Potomac, Pat began her career on Capitol Hill and for the past twenty years has worked in public accounting. She is an accomplished trainer and public speaker. A resident of Potomac, Ms. Cornish was first appointed to the Commission in 2002.

She has played a very active role in the projects and events organized by the Commission including serving as chair of the 2003 Women's Legislative Briefing. Ms. Cornish has also served on the Legislative Committee of the Commission, which advocates federal, state and local legislation of particular concern to women.

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Farewell Message

By Anne Sanderoff-Walker



There are many ways to mark the passage of time: the change of seasons, events in our community that change the way we act and think, new people joining in the work we do while old friends go on to other things, and accomplishments measured against the plans we make and the goals we set.

The 2002-2003 year has been an extraordinary year in many ways. Our community was held hostage by the actions of two men who we will probably never understand. But we do understand the specialness of Montgomery County by the way our government leaders provided calm during times of anxiety and an atmosphere that allowed healing. Although these events robbed us of a beautiful autumn, our drought-busting winter will give us something to talk about for years to come. As for spring, there is always next year and summer will be summer. Hurricane Isabel has blown us all into autumn again.

As I was gifted with the confidence of the other commissioners to provide leadership for the commission, we set several goals for the work of the commission this past year. We continued the work of the Girls and Technology Committee, guiding the process of continuing the GURLS Power Computer Camps for middle school girls. The work of the legislative action committee was unique in that the focus was on one piece of legislation: Paid Family and Medical Leave. We were successful in forming a coalition of organizations that hopefully will continue the fight for the passage of this important legislation.

We formed a new committee around the issues facing the immigrant women in our community. The committee designed a four seminar series to address the opportunities and challenges that these special members of our community face. The first seminar gave an overview of the demographics, current legislation, as well as some personal insights. The next three seminars will address specific issues such as health and safety, economic empowerment and education.

This year also found us in new offices, providing new space to better serve our clients in the Career and Counseling Center, coinciding with our 30th anniversary. To celebrate this special anniversary, we established a web-based archive of 30 women who have been historically significant to Montgomery County. The accomplishments of these women were also symbolized in a quilt that hangs in the commissions offices, to remind us all that we always have models to show us the way. I am pleased to have been able to serve my community as the president of the Commission for Women. No passage of time will erase this special time from my life.

President's Message

By Patricia Cornish



Fall, by far, is my favorite season. It's a special time of the year. The sheer beauty of the turning leaves, the excitement of children returning to school, and the anticipation of new adventures. The Montgomery County Commission for Women is always eager to take on new adventures. It is an extraordinary organization dedicated to identifying and taking action on issues that are timely and important.

This year, the Commission for Women will focus on several major activities. These activities will be addressed by our Legislative Action Committee, the Girls in Technology Committee and the Immigrant Women Committee. The **Legislative Action Committee** is a standing committee of the Commission that reviews proposals introduced in the Maryland State Legislature and the U.S. Congress. This Committee intends to continue working on the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act which is vital to working families. Mark your calendars now for the Women's Legislative Briefing held on January 25, 2004. This exciting and informative briefing seeks to provide participants with knowledge about upcoming issues coming up for consideration in both the Maryland General Assembly and the U.S. Congress.

The **Girls and Technology Committee** will continue to partner with Montgomery College and Montgomery County Public Schools to sponsor the Girls and Technology Summer Camp and our camp scholarships for middle school girls, to attempt to break the gender barrier in computer programming. The committee will also sponsor an educators' conference on girls in technology in the spring of 2004.

The **Immigrant Women in Montgomery County (IWin Montgomery County) Committee** will continue to address the important issues facing women newly arrived in our country and in our community. The committee designed a four seminar series to address the opportunities and challenges that these newest members of our community face.

The Commission emphasizes **Outreach** to the community throughout the year. We will conduct a Leadership Training Seminar for members of local Commissions for Women in partnership with the Maryland Commission for Women. We will also co-sponsor events such as the Montgomery County Women's Fair and host meetings of the Council of Presidents of women's organizations and others.

We look forward to a year full of opportunity and yes, new adventures!

The Commission for Women Welcomes its New Commissioners

By Tracy Stuger

County Executive Douglas M. Duncan has appointed three new members and reappointed two members to the Montgomery County Commission for Women.

Victoria L. Dolan is a resident of Potomac and is the Chief Financial Officer and Senior Vice President for Finance in Marriott International's International Lodging. She holds an MBA from UCLA . She has lived and worked in both Japan and Costa Rica. In her career with Marriott she has been an advocate for working women's issues, and a mentor to other women.

Shelley A.N. Johnson is a resident of Woodbine, Maryland, and is the Coordinator of Business Management, Entrepreneurship and Information Technologies for the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). She is also an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University at both its Columbia and Gaithersburg campuses. She is now working with MCPS computer science teachers, Towson University's ComputerMania program for girls, and Cisco Inc.'s Girls in Technology programs.

Tedi S. Osias is a resident of Chevy Chase who formerly worked as chief of staff to Council member Howard Denis (May 2000 – July 2001), and before that as the executive director of the Montgomery County Board of Appeals, as a program analyst in the Office of Legislative Oversight, and as a county land use and transportation planner. She was also a legislative aide to Delegate Nancy Kopp. She has volunteered in Congressional election campaigns, and is a graduate of Leadership Montgomery. She holds a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Harvard University.

Reappointed to the Commission are:

Shirley Johnson, a resident of Rockville, and has served on the Commission since July 2000. She has a long and distinguished history of community activism in Montgomery County, having served on many advisory committees, boards and councils. She is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Theta Omega Omega Chapter and the National Council of Negro Women. She is just completing her second term on the county's Commission on Health, and served on the Smoke-Free Montgomery County Coalition and the Smoke-Free Maryland Board of Directors.

She has worked on the planning committee of the county Women's Fair, and has helped with the Women's Legislative Briefing. She earned a B.A. degree from Howard University in 1958, is a graduate of Leadership Montgomery Community Leaders Program, Class of 1996, and was inducted into the Montgomery County Human Rights Hall of Fame in 2002.

Gary P. Smith is the Computer Science Curriculum Specialist for Montgomery County Public Schools, and lives in Germantown. He holds a Masters Degree in Computers in Education and it was Mr. Smith who first brought the lack of preparation girls receive for information technology education to the attention of the Commission for Women. He has led the Commission's Girls in Technology Initiative for three years and has spoken across the nation on this subject.

The Commission for Women is a 15 member advisory board created by an act of law in 1972. Its mandate is to advise the County Executive, the County Council, the public and the agencies of the county, state and federal government on issues of concern to the women of Montgomery County. Each commissioner serves a three-year term without compensation. The Commission for Women welcomes its new members, and commends County Executive Douglas Duncan on his appointments.

A Brave New World Seminar Series

By Tracy Stuger

On September 17, 2003, the Commission convened the second in its series of seminars focused on immigrant women. The seminar, **Education Issues for Immigrant Women and their Families**, highlighted special issues surrounding the education and child care system affecting immigrant women and their families. Speakers for the day included Teresa Wright, Parent Resource Teacher, Montgomery County Public Schools, Tuyet Tran, Parent Specialist, Montgomery County Public Schools, Nancy Navarro, Executive Co-Director, Centro Familia, and Raqiya Abdalla, President, Somali Health Care Network. The workshop was moderated by Ginny Gong, Director, Montgomery County Community Use of Public Facilities. The next seminar is scheduled for **October 15, 2003** and will focus on Health, Safety, and Domestic Violence Issues for Immigrant Women.

In July 2002, the Commission for Women created the Immigrant Women in (IWin) Montgomery County Committee to examine the issues faced by women and their families new to this country and to our county. In an effort to provide insight, experience and recommendations on these issues, the committee planned a series of four seminars on immigrant women. The seminars focus on a range of social, cultural and economic issues facing immigrant women and will provide critical information and an opportunity for the attendees to begin working together toward forming solutions.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Women's Legislative Briefing 2004

January 25, 2004*

The Commission for Women has begun planning for the 2004 Women's Legislative Briefing. The event will be held on **January 25, 2004*** from 12:30 p.m. - 5:45 p.m. at the National 4-H Conference Center, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, Maryland.

We are currently seeking cosponsors for this important event. Co-sponsoring organizations are asked to provide a representative to participate in planning the briefing; submit a co-sponsorship fee of \$50 (which will allow us to offer free registration to participants); and publicize the briefing through organizational newsletters or other publications or news releases.

Last year's briefing was well received by the public and enthusiastically co-sponsored by more than 60 women's and community organizations. We are hopeful that the upcoming briefing will be even more regional, and that even more organizations from even more counties will participate as co-sponsors of this important event.

If your organization would like to co-sponsor the 2004 briefing, we ask that your official representative attend the next planning meeting on **October 1**. The co-sponsorship form (on page 7) and a check for the co-sponsorship fee (*made payable to the 2004 Women's Legislative Briefing*) may be submitted at the first planning meeting, or sent to the Montgomery County Commission for Women, 401 N. Washington Street, Suite 100, Rockville, MD 20850. For further information, please call Tracy Stuger at (240) 777-8331.

Planning meetings for the briefing will be held at the White Oak Library, 11701 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland on the following dates: Wednesday, October 1, 2003, Tuesday, November 4, 2003*, Thursday, December 4, 2003, Wednesday, January 7, 2004, Wednesday, February 4, 2004 (Wrap-Up meeting). Meetings will begin at 7:00 p.m.

**This is a revised date. Please check your calendars to make sure that you have the correct date noted.*

Women's Legislative Briefing **Sunday, January 25, 2004**

Co-Sponsorship Form

Organization: _____
 (Please type or print as it should appear on the publicity/program)

Business Address: _____

 City County State Zip

 Telephone Number Fax Number E-mail Address

Organization's President: _____

- ☐ Yes, we will co-sponsor the 2004 Women's Legislative Briefing ☐ We will be unable to co-sponsor the 2004 Women's Legislative Briefing

Official Representative: _____

Address: _____

 Telephone Number (home) (work) fax E-mail

- ☐ We are enclosing a check for \$50 made payable to the **2004 Women's Legislative Briefing**
- ☐ We will bring our check to the November 4th Planning Meeting

Authorized Signature: _____

(Optional) Our organization offers to be responsible for the following task(s):

- ☐ Evaluations ☐ Fund-raising ☐ Hostess/Hospitality
- ☐ Name Tags ☐ On-Site Registration ☐ Pre-registration
- ☐ Program ☐ Publicity ☐ Signs

Note: Deadline to submit the co-sponsorship form is **December 4, 2003**. Organizations co-sponsoring after this date may not be listed on the publicity.

Return to: Montgomery County Commission for Women
 401 N. Washington Street, Suite 100
 Rockville, MD 20850
 240-777-8330 Fax: 301-279-1318

Commission for Women Receives National Association of Counties (NACo) 2003 Achievement Award

By Clotilde Puertolas

Every year, the National Association of Counties (NACo) provides Achievement Awards to recognize innovative county government programs. This year, Montgomery County, received 37 awards for outstanding programs. Several departments received awards, including the Montgomery County Commission for Women. The Commission was granted the 2003 NACo Achievement Award for its Women's History On-Line Archives project.

The Archives project features the biographies of 30 women of historical significance for the county. The idea for this project started in 2001 when a local reporter, unable to find historical information about women from Montgomery County, contacted the Commission to request guidance and information. After several hours of looking through files and documents from the Commission's three decades of work, a list of women was developed. The Commission realized that a compendium of information about women who had contributed to the county's history did not exist. The Commission concluded that there was a need for organizing an archive in which women's contributions to the county could be easily found. The concept of creating a collection of biographies of women of historical significance to the county - an archive - was born.

Because the Commission was celebrating its 30th anniversary, it decided that the initial archive would include 30 women. The women selected included the well-known as well as those whose accomplishments have largely been forgotten, including women born into slavery and those who entered professions or positions never before occupied by women. These women were also memorialized in a quilt (The Montgomery County Women's History Quilt). Created by the 2002 Commission President, Anne Sanderoff-Walker, a professional fiber artist, the quilt is composed of 33 squares, one for each of the 30 women, and three squares depicting the history of the organization. The quilt is permanently on display in the offices of the Montgomery County Commission for Women. Three classrooms in the Commission's offices have been named after three of the women depicted in the Archives: Clara Barton, Rachel L. Carson, and Emily C. Edmonson.

The Montgomery County Women's History Archive is posted in the Commission for Women's web pages of the County Government website (www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw). It has been cross-referenced on various search engines so that it is easy to find. This Archive will be an evolving resource to individuals who want to research or simply find information about women who have left an important mark on the history of Montgomery County. More biographies of women of historical significance will be gradually added to the Archive.

In 1970, NACo established the annual Achievement Award Program, a non-competitive awards program that recognizes counties for improving the management of and services provided by county government. Awards are made in more than 20 categories, ranging from Arts and Historic Preservation to Volunteerism. This year's NACo Achievement Award winners represented 24 states and 107 counties.

Women's Leadership Institute

By Tracy Stuger

Almost 70 advocates for women's rights and women's concerns from throughout the state of Maryland met at the offices of the Montgomery County Commission for Women on Friday, October 3, 2003 to participate in the Women's Leadership Institute (WLI). The event was sponsored as a partnership between the Montgomery County Commission for Women and the Maryland Commission for Women and was designed to provide leadership training to members of local commissions in areas such as advocating change effectively and communicating vision to others.

The day began with a welcome by both Pat Cornish, President of the Montgomery County Commission for Women and Randa Phamy Hudome, Chair of the Maryland Commission for Women who each thanked the attendees for their participation. The participants were greeted by First Lady of Maryland, Kendel S. Ehrlich who discussed her plans to establish, using only private funds, a museum of Maryland Women's Heritage.

Dr. Leslie Wolfe, President of the Center for Women Policy Studies presented the keynote address. A former commissioner of the Montgomery County Commission for Women, Dr. Wolfe has worked extensively in the area of discrimination and has been a leader on many critical issues affecting women. She discussed the importance of involving more women in roles of leadership and of ensuring that the needs of women of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds are included in the work of Commissions for Women.

In addition to training commissioners for leadership roles, the WLI served as an opportunity to strengthen bonds among the many commissions for women in Maryland. Commissions for Women from all corners of the state were represented including Carroll County, Cecil County, Frederick County, Harford County, Howard County, Maryland, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Washington County and Worcester County.

The participants engaged in workshops on leveraging conflict, understanding the tools needed for leadership and developing a plan for action for themselves as individual leaders, and community leaders. Facilitators Sandra Van Fossen, Julie Thompson, Gloria Mobley and Tara Amann then led the group in a discussion regarding the elements and skills involved in being a good leader. The curriculum used in the training has been used both nationally and internationally and was developed after many years of research funded by the Kellogg Foundation on women's community-based leadership.

AAUW, Gaithersburg Mentors Eighth Grade Girls

By Marilyn Thomas Leist, Ed.D.

(Portions of this article were excerpted from one written by Stacy Duck, reporter, for the Gaithersburg Gazette.)

Lana Cobb and Wave Starnes of the Gaithersburg Branch of AAUW organized a successful mentoring project for 20 eighth grade girls at Gaithersburg Middle School. In Montgomery County eighth graders develop plans for their high school experience, which in turn often sets the stage for their career choices. Cobb and Starnes recruited 20 mentors who met one-on-one with 20 eighth-grade girls for four weeks to help the girls prepare their high school plan, a document that delineates what classes they will take in high school. During one of the sessions the mentors and students rode a school bus to Hood College where administrators and students told the girls about college and took them on a tour of the campus. The part of the day that impressed the girls most was hearing a first year student talk about her experiences. They listened intently as she told how she made sure she got in to college. Another eye-opener for the girls was hearing about the availability of financial aid.

The counselors at Gaithersburg Middle School said mentors helped the girls focus their goals, and the trip to Hood College helped the girls visualize themselves in a college setting. "The idea is to sell them on a dream of going to college, and then to help them go through the steps to get there," said Carol Petty, a school counselor who selected the girls and coordinated the program. A common theme among the girls was the desire to continue their education, so they can support their families and avoid the financial difficulties they have watched their parents and other relatives struggle through.

"I feel like I want to spoil my mom, to say thank you for all she's done for us," said Stephanie Gonzalez, 14. "At first I didn't want to go [to college] because I was afraid it would be too much of a load on my mom, but now I've seen that these programs have lots of scholarships." Gonzales will be the first in her family to receive a college education, and she wants to be an orthopedic surgeon. Her mentor, Sol de Ande Eaton was thrilled. Eaton is the diversity director for the National Institute of Standards and Technology, but began her career as a chemist after receiving a scholarship from AAUW to study chemistry at Catholic University. To help Gonzales, Eaton researched different types of scholarships that Gonzales may be eligible for when she is ready to apply to college. Now that Gonzales knows about the scholarships, Eaton hopes she will push even harder to achieve in high school and make it into college.

Continued from previous page

And Jackie Guandique, 13, said the program helped make her childhood dream of becoming a lawyer more concrete. “A lot of people in my family didn’t go to college, and they’ve had a lot on their backs,” Guandique said. “The program helped me get an idea of what courses I would have to take to get where I want to be ... I want my future to be easy for me.” Her mentor Marilia Matos said she helped Guandique look more critically at what kinds of courses would be required to get into college and then into law school. As a result, Guandique has decided to take more challenging classes than she otherwise may have chosen in high school. “I think the goal of the organization is to encourage women to finish college and be educated. Especially among Hispanic girls, the percentage that go to college and finish is not as high,” said Matos, department director for administration at the National Institute of Standards and Technology. “A lot of times they don’t have someone to encourage them to finish.”

The mentoring experience was so rewarding for the mentors and so beneficial to the girls that AAUW Gaithersburg will engage 40 mentors in the process this year—double the amount from last year—and we are recruiting mentors. If you would like to be a mentor call Marilyn Leist at 240-481-3092 or e-mail at mtleist@comcast.net

Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery County, MD “Building Homes and Lives in Montgomery County”

Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery County (HfH-MC) is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International whose mission is to reduce substandard housing by providing a hand-up rather than a handout to help low-income families realize the dream of homeownership. Working in partnership with selected families, Habitat volunteers build affordable housing here in Montgomery County.

HfH-MC is a nonprofit organization that relies solely on the donations – both money and time – of local corporations, churches, agencies, and individuals in order to continue important work in the community. There are many volunteer opportunities available for individuals who are interested in getting involved. In addition to swinging a hammer on the construction site on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, volunteers are needed to fill roles on several working committees – including Family Selection, Family Support, and Marketing – that handle the “behind the scenes” work of the affiliate.

Please contact Alia Williams, Volunteer Coordinator, at (301) 990-0014 x15 or williamsa@habitat-mc.org if you are interested in becoming a Habitat volunteer and attending one of our monthly orientation sessions.

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on our services and workshops!*



Save the Date!!!
Sunday, January 25, 2004
For more information please call 240-777-8330

Upcoming legislative initiatives in the 2004 Maryland General Assembly will be addressed in workshops covering economic self-sufficiency, safety, effective lobbying, international women's issues and health. The event will be held ***Sunday, January 25, 2004 at the National 4-H Conference Center, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD from 12:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.*** It will conclude with a reception providing guests with the opportunity to meet with County and State elected officials, and to network with advocates and representatives of other women's organizations. Hosted by Montgomery County Commission for Women, the legislative briefing is co-sponsored by the Commissions for Women of several counties and over 60 additional women's and community organizations.

The Women's Legislative Briefing is free and open to the public. For more information on the Women's Legislative Briefing, please call 240-777-8330. We very much look forward to seeing you there!